SOLDIERS of the NAPOLEONIC WARS

By BRYAN FOSTEN

British Foot Guards At Waterloo June 1815

(1) *Quatre Bras and Waterloo*

Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards, Private Man in Service Dress, 1815, wearing the campaign cover over the shako with trousers and gaiters.

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On the march towards Quatre Bras early morning June 16, 1815. The Guards moved off from Hove at about 4.00 o'clock and arrived at Braine-le-Comte at 9.00 o'clock. Greatcoats were worn at this early hour against the cold dawn air – later in the day the men would suffer greatly from the oppressive humid heat.

Part 1: The Foot Guards at Quatre Bras and Waterloo

IN March 1815 Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from captivity on the Isle of Elba and landed in France with a small escort of faithful troops. Before the end of the month, having won the Army to his side, he had re-established himself as the undisputed ruler of France and the Bourbon King Louis XVIII was once more in exile.

The delegates of the major European powers who were at the time wrangling over the future of France and the rest of the continent at the so-called Congress in Vienna promptly forgot their differences and united to overthrow the man they had denounced as the 'General Enemy of the World'. Napoleon's intelligence network had informed him that for the moment he had nothing to fear from Russia or from Austria. Britain and the now powerful Prussia were therefore his most dangerous enemies and Napoleon decided to assume an immediate offensive towards the Low Countries against the armies of those countries. The defence of the area was assigned to a combined Anglo-Hanoverian Army and Dutch-Belgian Army commanded by the Duke of

The 'Iron Duke', His Grace Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, was the Allied Commander-in-Chief. Many of his staff were officers from the Foot Guards regiments. This French painting gives a good likeness of the Duke, complete with spy glass, as he was at Waterloo.

Wellington, and a Prussian Army under the command of the Prussian Field Marshal Prince Blücher von Wahlstadt.

By the middle of June 1815 the Anglo-Allied Army, which had been gradually assembled under the aegis of the Duke of Wellington, amounted to approximately 106,000 men, including 82,062 infantry, 14,482 cavalry and 8,166 artillery with 204 guns plus engineers, sappers, waggon train and staff corps. To oppose these forces Napoleon had mustered 116,000 men and 350 guns. The Prussian Army totalled 117,000 men and 312 guns and so, collectively, the armies of Wellington and Blücher greatly outnumbered Napoleon's forces. His strategy was therefore to strike at the centre of their front, wedge his Grand Army between theirs, defeat each separately, and thus prevent them effecting a united front against him.

Early on June 15 the French began to advance across the River Sambre in three columns and the actions that followed have become familiar as the Battles of Ligny, Quatre Bras and Waterloo. This history is concerned with the part played by the three regiments of British Foot Guards in the Battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo and the uniforms and equipment used by the regiments during the campaign. Then, as now, the British Foot Guards regiments were the senior infantry units in the British army and these regiments, with their long and distinguished fighting records, hold a continuing fascination for military historians and uniform enthusiasts. Considerable original research has been carried out in order to present this comprehensive study. Contemporary documents and regulations have been consulted, and actual clothing and equipment of the time has been examined and measured. This has resulted in the unearthing of much new material and, has enabled some orders of dress, for example, to be illustrated for the first time ever.

This first section gives a detailed account of the part played by the Foot Guards regiments in the Waterloo campaign. Subsequent sections deal with uniforms, equipment, weapons, and drill of the period as these affected the Guards.

THE ORDER OF BATTLE

The smart bearing and élan of the Foot Guards are well captured in this French painting which shows them in action in the Waterloo period. In real-life, however, they would almost certainly be wearing oilskin covers over the shako.

ALL three regiments of British Foot Guards were represented in Wellington's Army. Battalions of the 1st Foot Guards, the Coldstream Regiment (2nd Foot Guards) and the 3rd Foot Guards were formed in the 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades of the British 1st Division. The Division formed part of the First Army Corps under the command of HRH General the Prince of Orange.

The First Division

Commanded by :
Major General George Cooke.
Aides de Camp :
Capt G. Desbrowe, 1st Foot Guards.
Ensign A. Cuyler, 2nd Foot Guards.

1st Brigade

Commanded by :
Major General Peregrine Maitland.
Aides de Camp :
Ensign Lord Hay, 1st Foot Guards.
Cornet Lord William P. Lennox, Royal Horse Guards.

2nd Brigade

Commanded by :
Major General Sir John Byng, K.C.B.
Aide de Camp :
Capt H. Dumaresq, 9th Foot.
Brigade Major :
Capt W. Stothert, 3rd Foot Guards.

Officers serving on Wellington's Staff

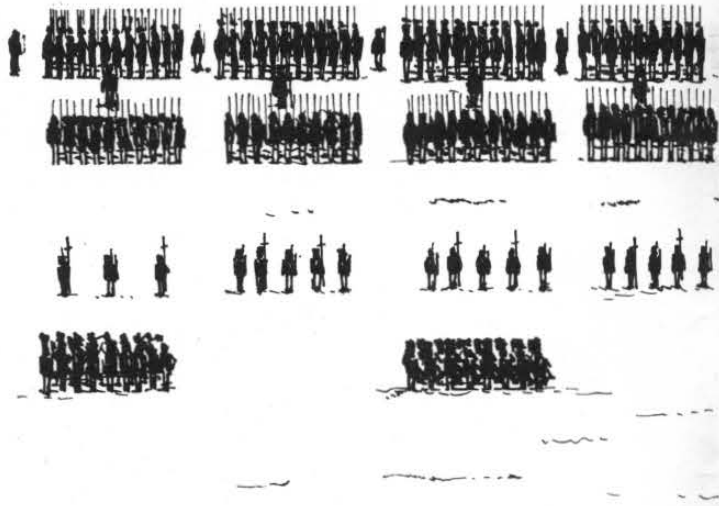
Military Secretary :
Lt-Col Lord FitzRoy Somerset, 1st Foot Guards.
Aides de Camp :
Lt-Col J. Fremantle, 2nd Foot Guards.
Lt-Col C. F. Canning, 3rd Foot Guards.
Lt-Col Sir Alexander Gordon, 3rd Foot Guards.
Major C. H. Churchill, 1st Foot Guards.
Capt N. Chambers, 1st Foot Guards.
Capt F. Dawkins, 1st Foot Guards.
Extra Aides de Camp :
Capt Hon. O. Bridgeman, 1st Foot Guards.
Capt Lord James Hay, 1st Foot Guards.

Officers serving on the Adjutant General's Staff

Assistant Adjutants General:
Lt-Col Sir Noel Hill, K.C.B., 1st Foot Guards.
Lt-Col D. Barclay, 1st Foot Guards.
Lt-Col H. Rooke, 3rd Foot Guards.
Deputy Assistant Adjutants General:
Capt Lord Charles Fitzroy, 1st Foot Guards.
Capt C. Bentinck, 2nd Foot Guards.
Assistant Quarter Masters General:
Col J. Woodford, 1st Foot Guards.
Sir W. Gomm, K.C.B., 2nd Foot Guards.
Sir Henry Bradford, K.C.B., 1st Foot Guards.
Deputy Assistant Quarter Masters General:
Capt W. Moore, 1st Foot Guards.
Capt W. Cameron, 1st Foot Guards.

Commandant of the Duke of Wellington's Headquarters

Colonel Sir Colin Campbell, K.C.B., 2nd Foot Guards.



Below: *The Duke of Wellington declared Lieutenant Colonel Sir James Macdonnell, 'the bravest man on the field' for his leadership at Hougoumont. Here he is shown in later years as a general (National Army Museum).*

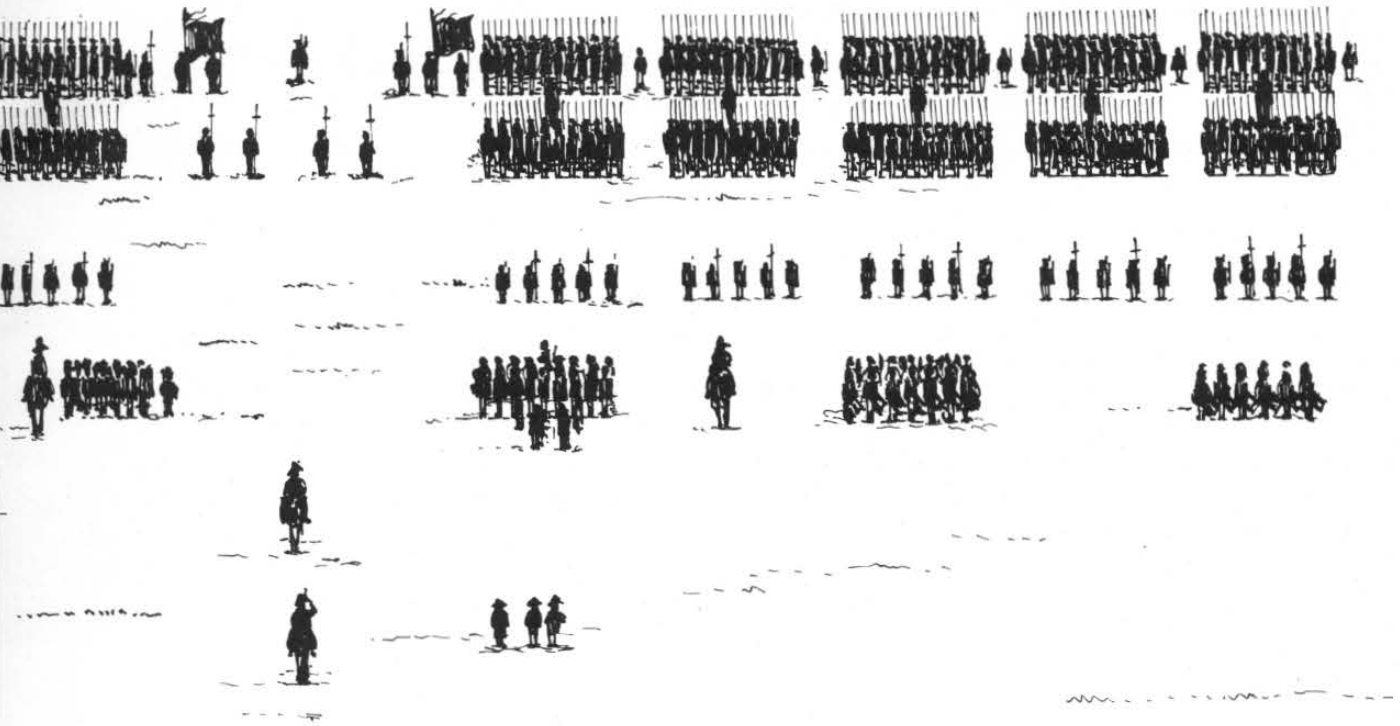
The ten companies formed up in line with their Light Infantry on the left and the Grenadiers on the right. In the centre of the line, between the 4th and 5th companies the Colour Party were posted. Each company was split into two platoons, separated from each other by one pace: on the right flank of each company and level with its front rank was the Company Commander. On the left of the Light Infantry was an Ensign. In the one pace interval between the platoons and central to it was a sergeant. Four paces behind each company were posted the other company officers and sergeants, in line, and in each case reading from left to right on the plan – ensign, sergeant, lieutenant, sergeant, lieutenant except in the case of the Light Infantry where the line consisted of a lieutenant and two sergeants (the ensign occupying a post level

Brigade composition and organisation in June 1815

The Foot Guards had been in Belgium some months before the campaign opened and were quartered in and around Enghien, Marcq and Hove, south-west of Brussels and roughly half way between Lessales and Hal. The officers were billeted in local well-to-do houses and in the chateau at Enghien and the troops were either encamped in the Park of the Chateau or billeted with the village people.

First Brigade

Comprised the *2nd Battalion, 1st Foot Guards* and the *3rd Battalion, 1st Foot Guards*. The combined battalions totalled 1,997 NCO's and men with 73 officers, including a surgeon and two assistant surgeons.



Parade Formation of a British Infantry Battalion from the 1812 Edition of the Infantry Drill Book and the Drill Book of the Kings German Legion

with the front rank of the company and on its left flank as described before). Three paces behind the officer and sergeants of the Light Infantry were their Bugles, the drums and fifes were level and behind the 7th Company, a major (mounted) behind the 6th Company and the pioneer detachment under the command of their corporal behind the 5th. The Band of Music was level and behind the 4th Company, the Senior Major (mounted) was behind the 3rd Company and further drums and fifes were posted behind the 2nd. On the right of this line the Drums of the Grenadiers were posted behind its own Company. One pace behind this line was the Adjutant (mounted) and three paces behind him the Lieutenant Colonel (mounted). The Surgeon and his mates were posted one pace in front of the Lieutenant Colonel and behind the Band. Each platoon was formed in two sections.

The Battalion was formed up in Grand Divisions each comprised of two companies. The Grenadiers and the 1st Company formed the First Grand Division, the 2nd and 3rd Companies the Second, the 4th, Colour Party and 5th Companies the Third, the 6th and 7th Companies the Fourth and the 8th and the Light Infantry Company the Fifth Grand Division.

The Colour Party consisted of the two ensigns carrying the Colours flanked and covered by two colour sergeants and with four sergeants one pace behind, covering. The Sergeant Major took post between the two inner colour sergeants and slightly in front of them.

Second Brigade

Comprised the *2nd Battalion, Coldstream Regiment (2nd Foot Guards)*, and the *2nd Battalion, 3rd Foot Guards*. The combined battalions of this brigade totalled 2,064 NCO's and men. The Coldstreams had 36 officers and the 3rd Foot Guards 39, each battalion having a surgeon and two assistants.

Normally a British battalion of infantry had ten companies including a Grenadier Company and the Light Infantry Company. Inspection Reports reveal that when the battalions of Foot Guards were inspected in England before embarkation, some of their battalions had only eight companies, including the flankers, and in one case there were over ten. However, it is likely that by the time the campaign opened these anomalies had been resolved and it can be assumed that the battalions marched out to battle with the correct establishment.

Of the four battalions only the 3rd/1st Foot Guards had seen service with Wellington in the Peninsular but both the 2nd Coldstreams and the 2nd/3rd Foot Guards had detachments with Graham at Barrosa. Many of the officers had seen service in Spain but the majority of these had been on the Staff. Some of the reinforcements recruited to bring the battalions up to establishment were from Southern Counties Militia regiments.

Battalion strength

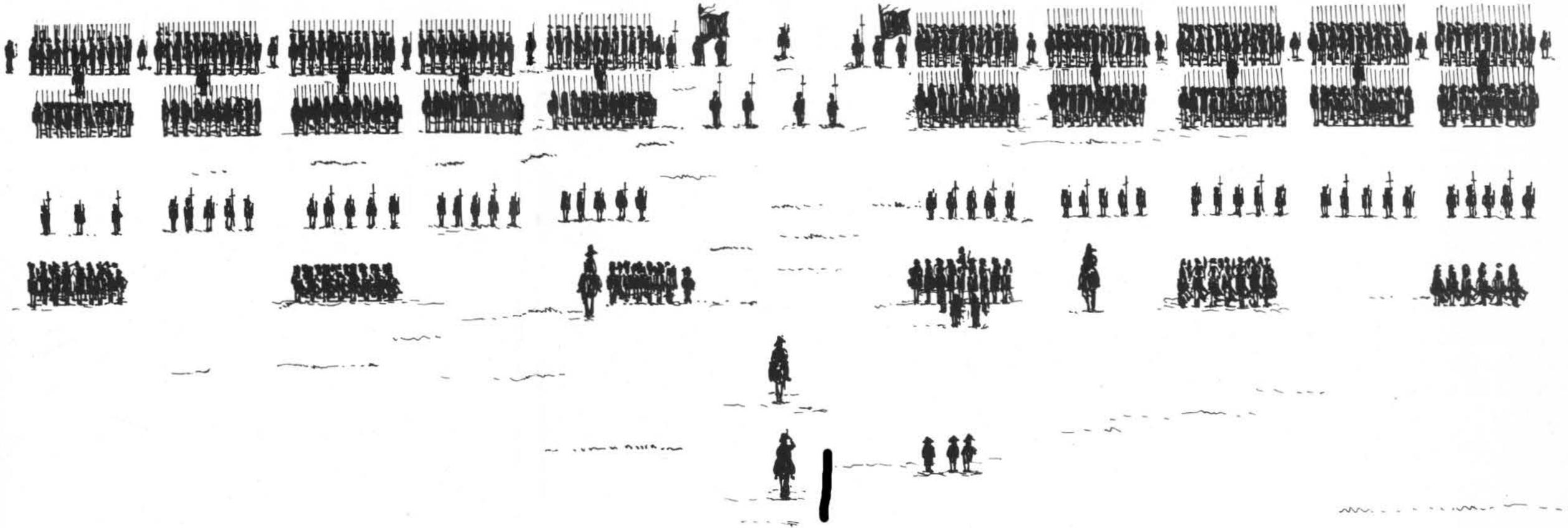
The battalions were commanded by Lieutenant Colonels assisted by two Majors one being known as the 'Senior Major'. The Battalion Staff included the Adjutant, the Quartermaster, the Surgeon and his two Assistants, the Sergeant Major, a staff sergeant acting as Paymaster, a staff sergeant acting as Quartermaster Sergeant and a sergeant acting as Armourer. The 10 Pioneers were formed under a Corporal.

Each company had 1 Captain, 2 Lieutenants, 1 Ensign, 5 sergeants, 5 corporals, 1 drummer, or bugler in the case of the Grenadier and Light Company, and approximately 96 men.

It is not known whether the Foot Guards Bands were with the battalions when they marched out, but they were certainly in Paris during the subsequent occupation.

The Colonels of the Regiments

1st Foot Guards:	Frederick, Duke of York, from 1805.
The Coldstream Regt:	Arthur, Duke of Cambridge, from 1805.
3rd Foot Guards:	William, Duke of Gloucester, from 1806.



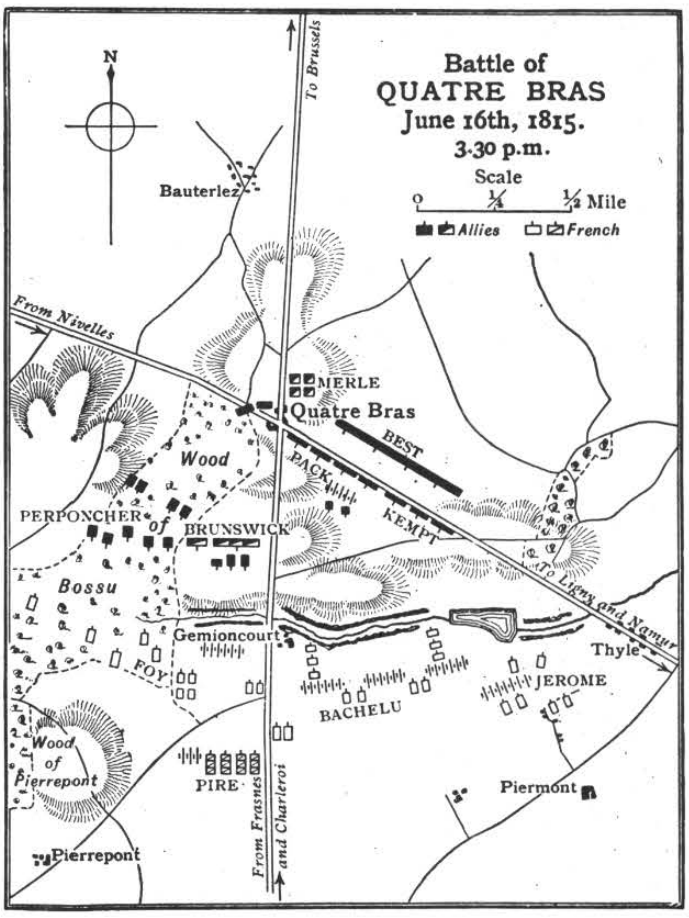
Parade Formation of a British Infantry Battalion from the 1812 Edition of the Infantry Drill Book and the Drill Book of the Kings German Legion

QUATRE BRAS

The Guards Brigades arrived late on the field of Quatre Bras and did not become involved in the fighting until after five o'clock (1700) on June 16. On this same day Napoleon had engaged the Prussians at Ligny and driven them from the field, though they retreated in good order. Meanwhile Marshal Ney had engaged Wellington's troops at Quatre Bras, the action starting in the early afternoon. The map below shows the overall disposition of the forces. Perponcher's 2nd Dutch-Belgian division fell back on the Allied right flank, losing the southern perimeter of the Bois de Bossu. The Guards approached from the west on the Nivelles Road and were deployed into the Bois de Bossu (Bossu Wood) to relieve the Dutch-Belgian troops. On the Allied left flank the fighting was in the open. The print of Lady Butler's painting above shows a British Regiment forming square to repulse a French Lancer charge during the afternoon.

A lieutenant and captain of the 1st Foot Guards recall that it was about two o'clock on June 15, 1815, that an orderly dragoon brought word to the Foot Guards that the French were crossing the frontier and that they were to hold themselves in readiness to move. By eight o'clock a second dragoon brought intelligence that the Prussians had been forced back over the River Sambre. Orders were issued for the troops to prepare their weapons and pack their kit and at half past one (0130) on the morning of June 16 the drummers were ordered to beat to arms and the battalions and the baggage were prepared to move off. They assembled at Hove and their heavy baggage and the hospital were ordered to Brussels. They moved off at four o'clock and by nine o'clock (0900) that morning had arrived at Braine-le-Comte where the battalions were halted. By three o'clock in the afternoon (1500) they were on the march to Nivelles suffering much from the heat. They halted in the town and had no sooner divested themselves of their knapsacks and equipment, when orders were given for them to advance to Hautain-le-Val. They then continued along the paved road to Namur. On the march the order was given to untie ten rounds of ammunition and to check their flints. Then the officers were ordered to join their companies and the men to fix bayonets.

At about five o'clock they reached the fringes of the Wood of Bossu and firstly the light infantry companies, and later the other companies were ordered into the wood. The wood was about three quarters of a mile long and three hundred yards wide. A



Right: *This map, from an old reference book on the subject, shows the disposition of the French and Allied forces before the Guards arrived. Note how Foy's division holds the southern section of the Bois de Bossu which the Guards later attempted to recover.*

small stream ran across it and on the left side and close to the edge was a ravine or hollow way. No sooner were the Guards in the wood than the French Artillery began to open a heavy fire and many of the Foot Guards died from the heads of the trees falling on them after being cut off by the heavy cannon fire.

The Guards had lost all order in running through the wood but as they came out they formed up in line and were joined by the stragglers and wounded of many other regiments. The fire was so heavy that the line could not advance far from the wood and eventually they were charged by cavalry. Any attempt to form square being impossible, they were ordered to deploy into the hollow way and began to fire by volleys throwing the cavalry back in confusion. It was now almost dusk and the Foot Guards fell back into the wood for protection. During the night the French and the British kept up a steady and accurate sharp-shooting but by the following morning the fighting had died away.

The retreat (June 17, 1815)

The early part of the day was spent in burying the dead and bringing the wounded from the wood and loading them into the baggage waggons. At first there was much moving of troops from one point to another so that the correct order of march could be

Right: '. . . *they began to fire by volleys, throwing the cavalry back in confusion.*'

Above: *The fierce fighting at Quatre Bras is well illustrated by this Victorian print which shows a British line regiment under pressure from French Hussars during the afternoon fighting.*

Right: *The Duke of Brunswick leading a gallant charge by the Brunswick Lancers and Infantry which was repulsed by the advancing French troops. While trying to rally the retreating infantry, the Duke was mortally wounded and fell from his horse. The French advance in this sector was subsequently repulsed by the 92nd Highlanders.*

established and some time later the Divisions began to move along the paved road towards Waterloo. An officer's letter records that the retreat was orderly and that although the men suffered much from the great heat there was little stoppage.

By late afternoon the sky had become covered with a dense mass of low-lying cloud and the atmosphere had become humid and oppressive. After a march of about ten miles the Foot Guards were directed by staff officers to move off to the left and to take a cart track which brought them behind a country chateau and farmyard with a large garden and an orchard. They learnt later that this was Hougoumont. The bulk of the Foot Guards continued to march onwards uphill and to move to their right through the standing corn up to the crest of the rise until they got to the paved road leading from Nivelles to Mont St Jean. The Division had hardly arrived in this position when the rain came deluging down and continued during the greater part of the night. The farm and the garden of the chateau had been occupied by the Light Infantry of the Coldstream Regiment together with their Pioneers and they spent the whole night forming loopholes and making firing platforms and boarding up vulnerable windows.

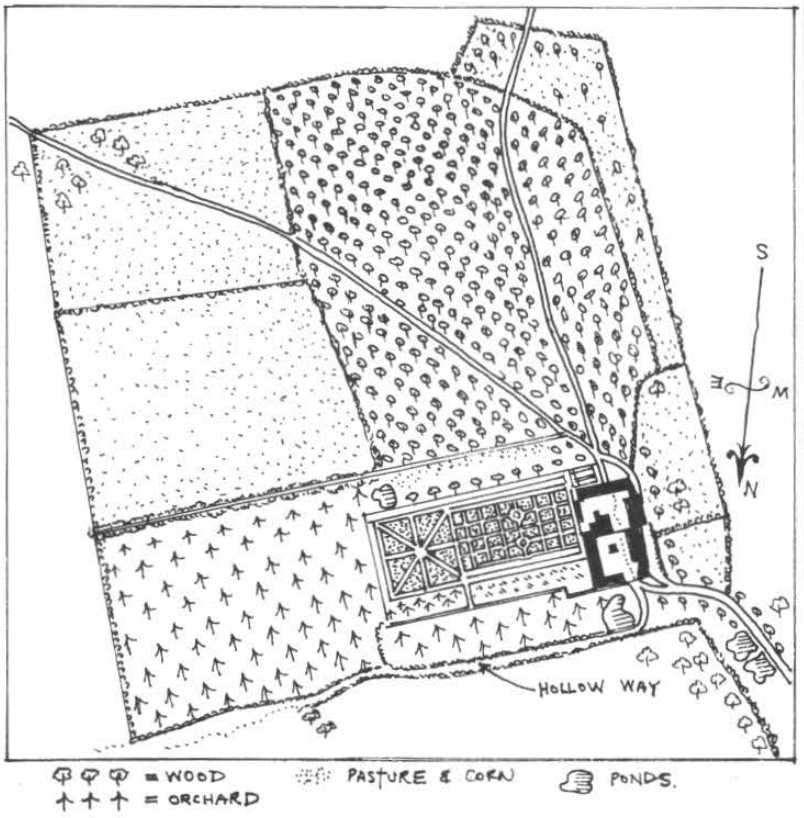
Right: *The Light Infantry company of the Coldstream Regiment, together with their Pioneers, spent the whole night in the pouring rain building firing platforms and making loopholes.*

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, JUNE 18, 1815

Napoleon embarked on the Waterloo campaign with some 124,000 men and 350 guns. He was greatly outnumbered by the Allies forces but was numerically superior to the two Allied components, the Prussians under Blücher or the Anglo-Germans under Wellington. Napoleon's decision to force his army in a wedge between the two Allied armies in Belgium led to the circumstances in which the Battle of Waterloo took place. Above: *Napoleon reviews his men on the morning of June 18, 1815.* Below: *The Chateau of Hougoumont and its surrounds (not to scale).*

The British had bivouacked in some confusion over the whole of the plateau which was to form their position. The night had been miserable, torrential rain and the high humidity had made sleep almost impossible for those of the troops unable to find reasonable shelter. Before dawn the rain died out and roused by the bugles and drums the men began to light fires, prepare food and to clean and dry their uniforms and arms. Orders were given to discharge muskets and this resulted in sporadic fusillades up and down the line which must have given the French vedettes some concern. Towards six o'clock (0600) the bugles, pipes and drums beat to arms and the troops assembled for inspection. This completed, the battalions, squadrons and batteries were led by the staff to their appointed positions.

Maitland's 1st Brigade was posted on and behind the ridge of the position between Colin Halkett's Brigade and Byng's 2nd Brigade and its light infantry companies were detached in the wood and the orchard of Hougoumont. The light infantry companies of Byng's 2nd Brigade were posted in the chateau, farm buildings and the gardens of Hougoumont and in the wood in front of it. At about noon they were reinforced by four additional companies of the Coldstreams. The Colours of the Coldstreams were under the protection of the 7th and 8th Companies who remained throughout the action either on the ridge or in the hollow ground behind it.

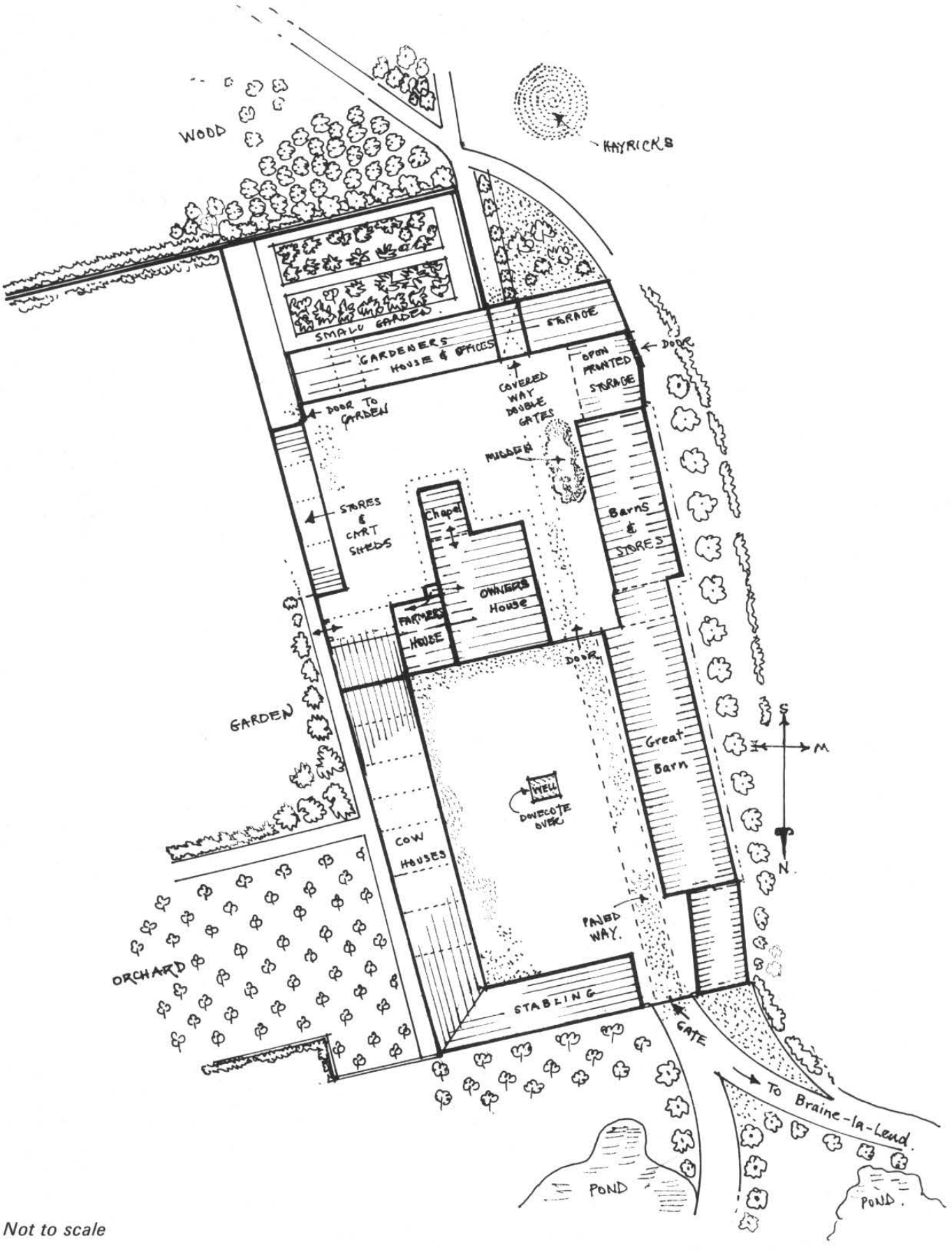


Hougoumont

The original name of the place was 'Gomont'. According to local tradition the name originated from the large pine trees which formed the major part of the wood adjoining the house. The resin from these trees was very much in demand locally and the place became known as 'Gomme Mont' or 'Gomont'. The 'Hougoumont' spelling was comparatively modern in 1815.

Lieutenant Colonel James Macdonell of the Coldstream Regiment found the farm well made for defence. The principal building, the dwelling house, known as the chateau, was a substantial building, in square plan, with small rectangular windows and with small recessed doorways. The windows were decorated with stone lintels and mullions. To the north-east of the chateau was the farm-house, the east end of which adjoined the Great Garden. In the angle between the farmer's house and the chateau was a narrow tower, slightly taller than the chateau and containing a stairway which linked the two buildings. At the south-eastern corner of the chateau and communicating with it was a small family chapel. Most of the buildings were rendered and painted white. On the north, or British side, was a large farmyard bounded

Sketch plan of the Chateau of Hougoumont



Not to scale

on the east by a large single-storey cow-shed and stabling, and on the west by a very substantial barn with adjacent store sheds. There was a continuation of the stabling and storage accommodation along the north boundary of the yard and a large and recessed gate giving on to a road which connected with the Nivelles Road. On the south side of the chateau was a courtyard enclosed by a barn on the west, the gardener's house, some further stabling and cart sheds on the south, and the garden wall and some sheds to the east. There was a door leading from the yard to the court between the chateau and the barn and also a cobbled carriageway leading from the court across the farm yard to the gate. A further gateway passed under a covered way by the Gardener's House and lead from the court across the farmyard to the gate. The approach to the Chateau from the Nivelles Road was lined with tall mature elm trees. The garden was laid out in the Dutch-Flemish style with formal beds planted with low growing herbs and plants and with a series of turf-laid radiating paths from a circular central area. The garden was enclosed on its southern side by a high brick wall and on the north by a thick quickthorn hedge.

Adjoining the garden on its eastern side was the orchard, planted with large apple, pear and plum trees and bounded in its turn by a further hedge and a hollow road forming a shallow moat. The hedge extended from the boundary of the wood facing the south garden wall and in the narrow space between those two boundaries was a row of apple trees. There was a further small garden in front of the gardener's house and on the western side

Pictures taken by the author at Hougoumont on the 150th anniversary of the battle show the scenes of the fighting very much as they originally appeared. Top: *The chapel seen from the gate leading into the garden.* Above: *The view from the North Gate.* Below: *A general view showing how waterlogged the ground becomes after a rainstorm.* Left: *Exterior of the Great Barn as seen by Jérôme's troops (a row of trees then skirted the boundary).*

Above: *An impression by the author of the well at Hougoumont as it appeared in 1815. The lower part is taken from photographs of the ruins dating from between 1850 and 1870, and the upper part is reconstructed from Scott's and Southey's descriptions and a letter written by an English lady visitor to the battlefield in late 1815.* Below: *A general view of Hougoumont from the former garden area.*

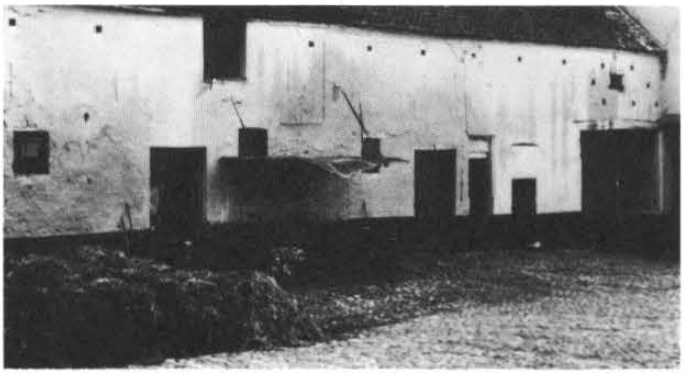
of the gardener's house gate were two smaller enclosures planted as a kitchen garden.

The wood was formed of closely planted pine trees with very little undergrowth and was bounded on the west by a small rough orchard and on the east by a large cornfield edged with hedges.

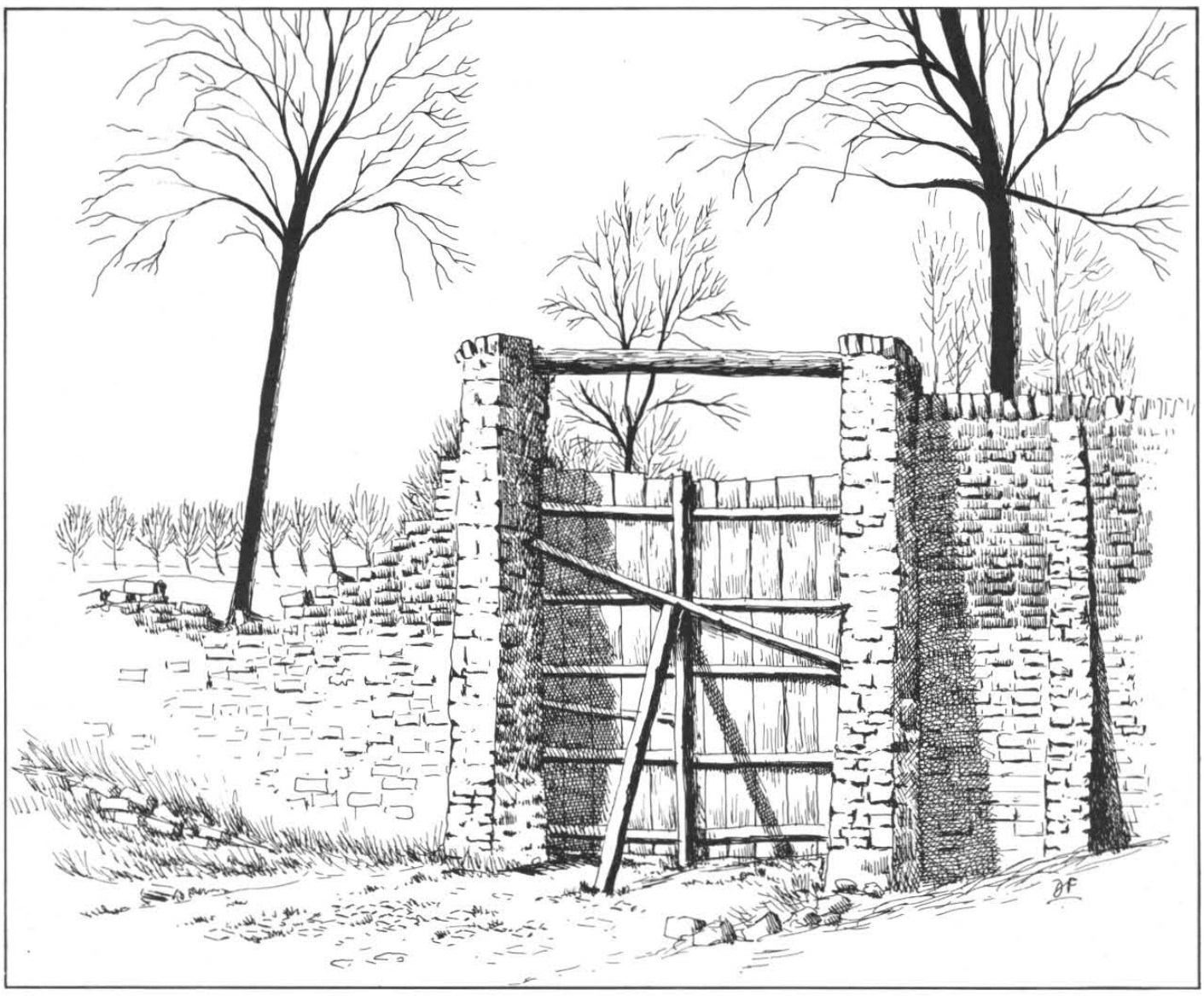
The Guards in action

The light companies of the 2nd Brigade under Lieutenant Colonel James Macdonell were disposed in the buildings and the gardens, and those of the 1st Brigade under Lieutenant Colonel Lord Saltoun in the Great Orchard and the wood together with detachments of Hanoverian Riflemen and Nassauers.

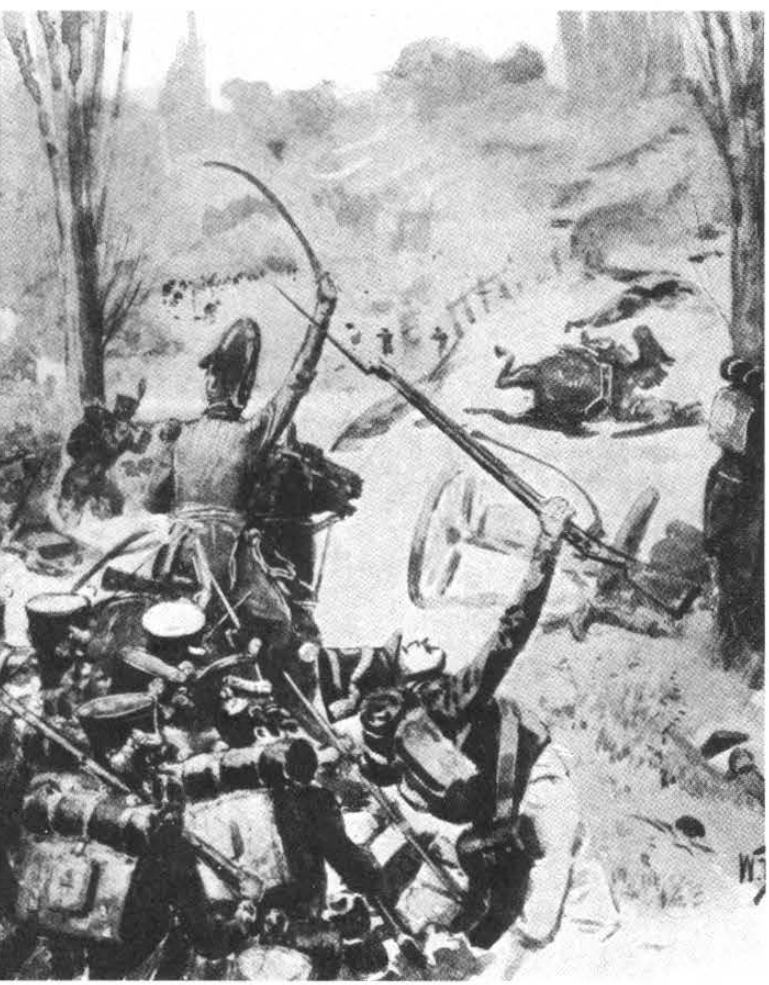
It was approximately 1130 when Napoleon ordered Lieutenant General Count Reille's 2nd Army Corps to open the battle by attacking the chateau. Prince Jérôme Napoleon began the attack with his 6th Division comprising eleven battalions of the 1st Light Infantry and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Regiments of the Line. As they moved towards the chateau the French columns came under heavy fire from British batteries of Horse Artillery who had been pushed forward to deal with this opening gambit. Although suffering heavily Jérôme's troops pushed forward driving in the Nassau Battalion and the Hanoverians from the wood perimeter. Meantime the howitzers of Bull's battery began to drop shells into the French masses, so successfully that for the moment they were forced from the fields approaching the orchard. Lord Saltoun's men now pushed out into the wood in



More pictures of Hougoumont, taken in 1965, showing scenes of the fighting. Top: *Stabling and midden.* Above: *Exterior of original stabling.* Below: *The North Gate of the Chateau of Hougoumont as it still appeared when photographed in 1850.*



Above: *Royal Horse Artillery batteries are brought forward to engage the French 6th Division whose battalions are attacking the Hougoumont chateau which can be seen under fire in the far distance.* Below: *French infantry of General Foy's division forced the Guards back from the wood, but not without heavy loss to themselves.*



support of the Nassauers and Hanoverians gradually checking the French advance and clearing the wood.

Lt General Foy's 9th Division was called up to support Jérôme and forced the Foot Guards back from the wood, although they resisted desperately fighting from tree to tree. Some Coldstreams and 3rd Foot Guards took shelter in the lane adjoining the haystack near the chateau, and the 1st Foot Guards were forced back in the Great Orchard. The French masses now began to attack the curtilage of the buildings and the garden. As they approached the boundary wall to the garden area a devastating volley fire crashed out from the loopholes and other positions of the Guards manning the firing platforms. The French could not scale the wall and were again forced to retreat taking cover behind trees and hedges. Further French light troop columns were advancing through the wood but were constantly attacked by heavy shell fire from Bull's howitzers, breaking up their dense formations and causing great loss.

Jérôme's columns forced their way back through the wood pushing back the light infantry of the Foot Guards until, through sheer force of numbers, they reached the confines of the Great Courtyard which the Foot Guards hastily closed with barrows, ladders, and old fence posts. A French party lead by a huge officer of the 1st Light Infantry and their sappers managed to force the gate and enter the yard. The Foot Guards had taken refuge behind every available cover and began to shoot the French down until Lieutenant Colonel Macdonell supported by Sergeant John Graham of the Coldstreams and two young ensigns forced the gate closed, having to strain against the thick timber doors to prevent the great press of French outside from re-opening them.

By this time the companies defending the chateau had become so hard pressed that four additional companies of the Coldstream Regt, under Lieutenant Colonel Woodford, were sent down as reinforcements. It was about 12 noon and they found that the enemy had managed to force an entry into some stabling and were still close to getting into the courtyard. The reinforcements charged these French masses from the rear and took advantage

of their confusion to gain entry into the chateau by a side door in the lane. Colonel Woodford was senior to James Macdonell but reassured him that he had no intention of assuming command of the post. While Woodford's reinforcements were being dispersed to their posts the French continued with their desperate attempts to gain entry via the gate. Colonel Macdonell and Sergeant Graham were still securing it, wedging baulks of timber and barrows in position. One French grenadier managed to climb the wall by the gate and was almost in a position to leap into the yard and open it from the inside. Captain Wyndham called to Graham who dropped the timber he was using, snatched up his musket, and shot the gallant Frenchman whose body dropped into the yard.

Meanwhile the French in the wood, finding their advance against the garden checked, tried to swing round and attack by debouching through a gap in the fence by the orchard. Lord Saltoun seized the moment to charge with the light infantry of the 1st Brigade and forced them back into the wood. This attack was followed by swarms of 'voltigeurs' making further attacks on the orchard forcing the Foot Guards once again to retreat using every tree to pick off the enemy.

Two further companies of the 3rd Foot Guards were sent down from the line to combat this critical phase in the battle and Saltoun took advantage of the situation to retake the orchard. About this time a wagon containing further supplies of cartridges was driven down from the line by a soldier of the Royal Wagon Train. Captain H. Dumaresq (9th Foot), ADC to Sir John Byng was shot through the body but realising the Duke's anxiety for the defence of Hougoumont, galloped back to the line regardless of his wound to report the progress of the battle, then fainted from loss of blood and was taken to the rear.

During the remainder of the afternoon Jérôme's and Foy's men

Above: *Lord Saltoun, seen here in later years as a Field Officer of the Genadier Guards, played a notable part in the Hougoumont action as a battalion commander.* Below: *The big French lieutenant of line infantry leads his men in forcing the gate. Lieutenant Colonel Macdonell is to the left of the gate (with sword) and the French soldier who tried to climb the wall lies dead in the foreground (National Army Museum).*

Above: *An interpretation of the interior of Hougoumont during the later stages of the defence. Although obviously incorrect in so many respects it gives a good impression of the fighting which appears to be soon after the bombardment by howitzers started. The outbuildings are beginning to burn and men are attempting to draw water from a well. Tied to the cart wheel in the foreground is a captured French infantryman. The men in this picture are from the light company.* Right: *A vivid impression is given here of the intensity of the close fighting as French infantry storm the wall at Hougoumont. Both the impressions on this page were by Victorian artists.*

made repeated attacks on the wood, garden wall and the gate. Eventually Byng was forced to send down further reinforcements and Colonel Hepburn, with the remains of the 3rd Foot Guards, moved down to join the decimated defenders. Hepburn's men rushed the orchard and the French gave way. So long foiled by the gallant defence of the post, Napoleon now decided to resort to long range attacks and ordered howitzer batteries to throw shells into the chateau buildings. The Great Barn, the outhouses on the northern side of the chateau, the farmer's house and finally the chateau itself were set ablaze. Soon dense clouds of black smoke were pouring up and drifting back over the Allied lines. The roofs of the buildings fell in and about three o'clock (1500) huge flames and showers of sparks burst out from the roofs. Many of the wounded had been carried into the buildings but because of the strength of the continuous infantry attacks men could not be spared to clear them from danger. Many perished in the flames, but others took shelter in the open yards and others in the chapel, which escaped the flames.

For the remainder of the day the defenders were subjected to further frenzied attacks from Jérôme's and Foy's infantry but defied every attempt to dislodge them. Eventually all the outhouses were on fire, the roof and the upper storey of the

chateau had fallen in and flames, showers of sparks and dense black smoke were still rising in the air. The heat had become intense and the smoke was suffocating defender and attacker alike. The light troops in the orchard had suffered severely and found it impossible to stem the continuous and concentrated attacks from the superior numbers of French infantry. They retreated into the hollow way by the hedges covered by the steady and continuous fire from the walls of the garden.

Shortly, further reinforcements, the 2nd Line Battalion of the King's German Legion and the light companies of the 3rd and 4th Line Battalions KGL, plus the remnants of the Brunswick Advanced Guard Jäger Battalion and the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Nassau Regiment arrived, and with their aid the wood was retaken and the chateau area made safe. By seven o'clock (1900) the attacks on the chateau had died down and had declined into sniping from both sides.

During the whole of the action the French never succeeded in gaining access to the garden or even scaling the walls. After the French began their retreat the Foot Guards were ordered to join the general advance but in view of their exhausted condition the defenders of Hougoumont were ordered to bivouac among the smouldering remains of the buildings and spent the next morning burying their dead and helping organise the cremation of the thousands of French dead in the wood, orchard and fields around the chateau. Reille's Army Corps is said to have lost 10,000 men in killed and wounded in attacks on the wood and orchard.

Hougoumont since the battle

In 1816 the remainder of the wood was felled. Most of the trees were dead or dying from the perforation of thousands of holes and wounds caused by canister and grape-shot. The shattered remains of the chateau and the farmer's house were removed shortly after but the Great Barn and the outbuildings were rebuilt and the gardener's house and the covered way leading to the site of the wood still remain as does the chapel.

In 1965 the writer was one of an archaeological team who visited the battlefield area. The present occupier of the farm gave permission for a thorough survey of the site. The foundation remains of the chateau and the farm-house and its tower were traced, as was the location of the old draw-well. The latter was still in existence in 1870 but had lost the dovecote superstructure which covered it in 1815. Even today, at every ploughing, metal relics are recovered. Ball shot, parts of muskets, bayonets and bones have all been unearthed over the years. The chapel has a small memorial to the Foot Guards and is still in good condition.

Above, Top to Bottom: *The exterior of the Great Barn, as it would have appeared to the attacking infantry. The Gardener's House and the covered way leading to the wood. The exterior of the Gardener's House. The small structure at right angles to the building is a later addition.* Below: *The North Gate with the chapel visible in the distance.*

THE REST OF THE BATTLE

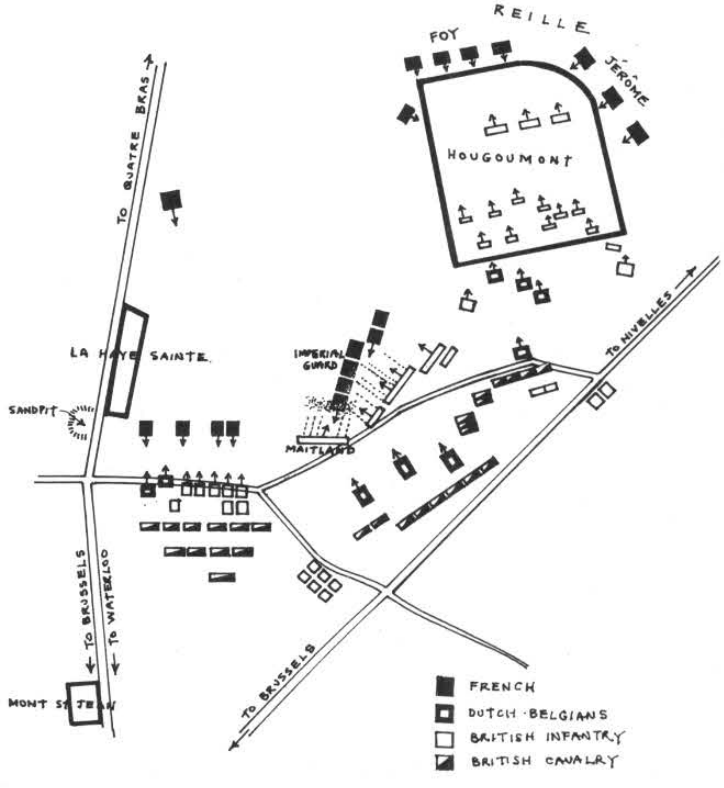
Above: *The classic British tactic of forming square to repulse a cavalry attack during the course of the battle. The regiment shown here is the 28th Foot, one of the British line regiments which fought with distinction at Waterloo.*

The First British Division was posted on the right of Sir Colin Halkett's Brigade, Maitland's forming the left Brigade of the Division. *The 3rd Battalion, 1st Foot Guards* were stood in columns of companies at quarter intervals on the crest of the Allied position with a suitable deploying interval between the column and the right column of Halkett's. The *2nd Battalion, 1st Foot Guards* were placed to the right of the *3rd Battalion* and slightly to their rear on the reverse slope of the ridge, immediately below its crest.

Byng's Brigade was posted between Maitland and the Nivelles Road and on the crest of the ridge. *The 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Regt* were on the right and placed forward on the front slope and the *2nd Battalion, 3rd Foot Guards* on their left. These columns were so placed that, on plan, they formed a 'chess-board' type of pattern. Byng's men were therefore on the rising ground behind the chateau and had commanding views over the buildings to the wood beyond.

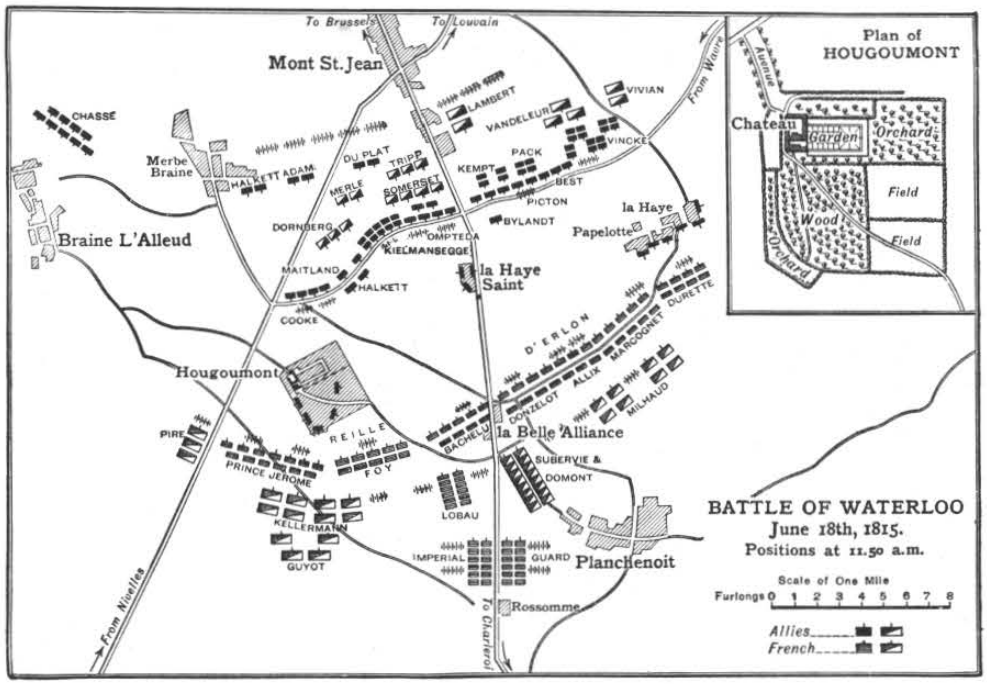
From the commencement of the general action the Guards were subjected to an incessant cannonade, sporadic attacks from cavalry and swarms of sharpshooters. At one period a square of the *3rd Battalion, 1st Foot Guards* became so vexed by incessant sniping from swarms of 'voltigeurs' who had crept up the forward slope and were hidden by thick corn that Maitland was obliged to form the battalion into sections and send them down the slope at the double to drive the enemy off. During this operation the battalion became exposed to cavalry who promptly charged. The Foot Guards managed to form up into some order and slowly made their way back to their former position under constant pressure and with some loss.

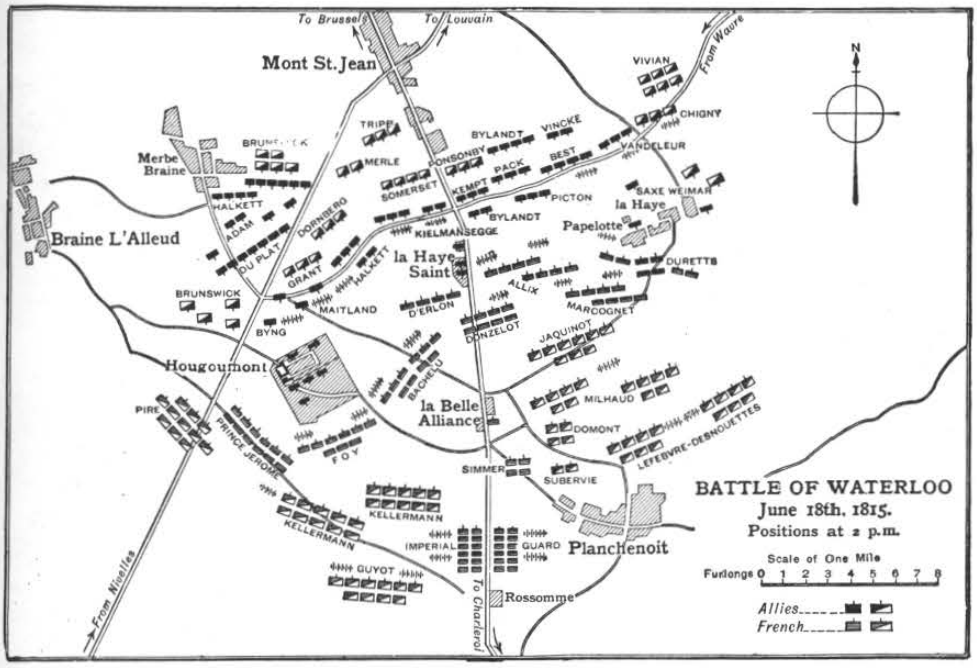
It was against this part of the British line that the final desperate attempt of the Imperial Guard was directed. At about seven o'clock in the evening Napoleon decided to throw in the remaining battalions of the infantry of his Imperial Guard in a final effort

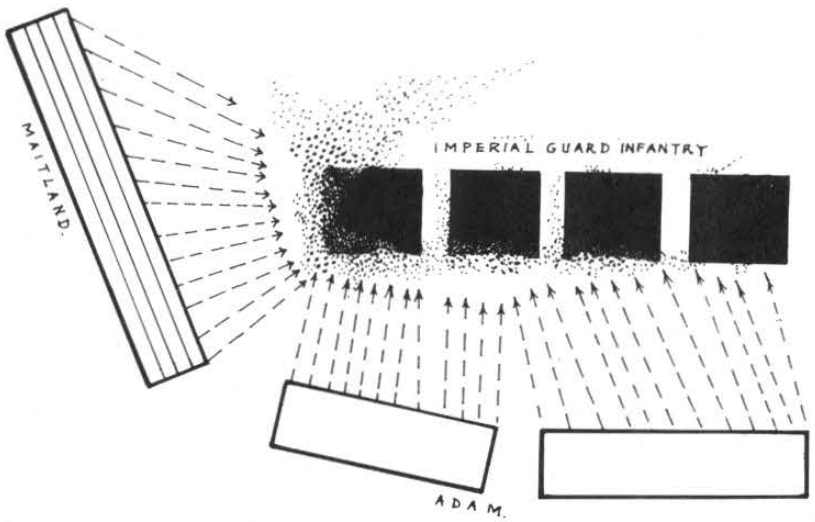


This sketch-map illustrates the attack by the Imperial Guard columns on Maitland's division.

General maps of the Waterloo field showing the situation at two important stages of the battle

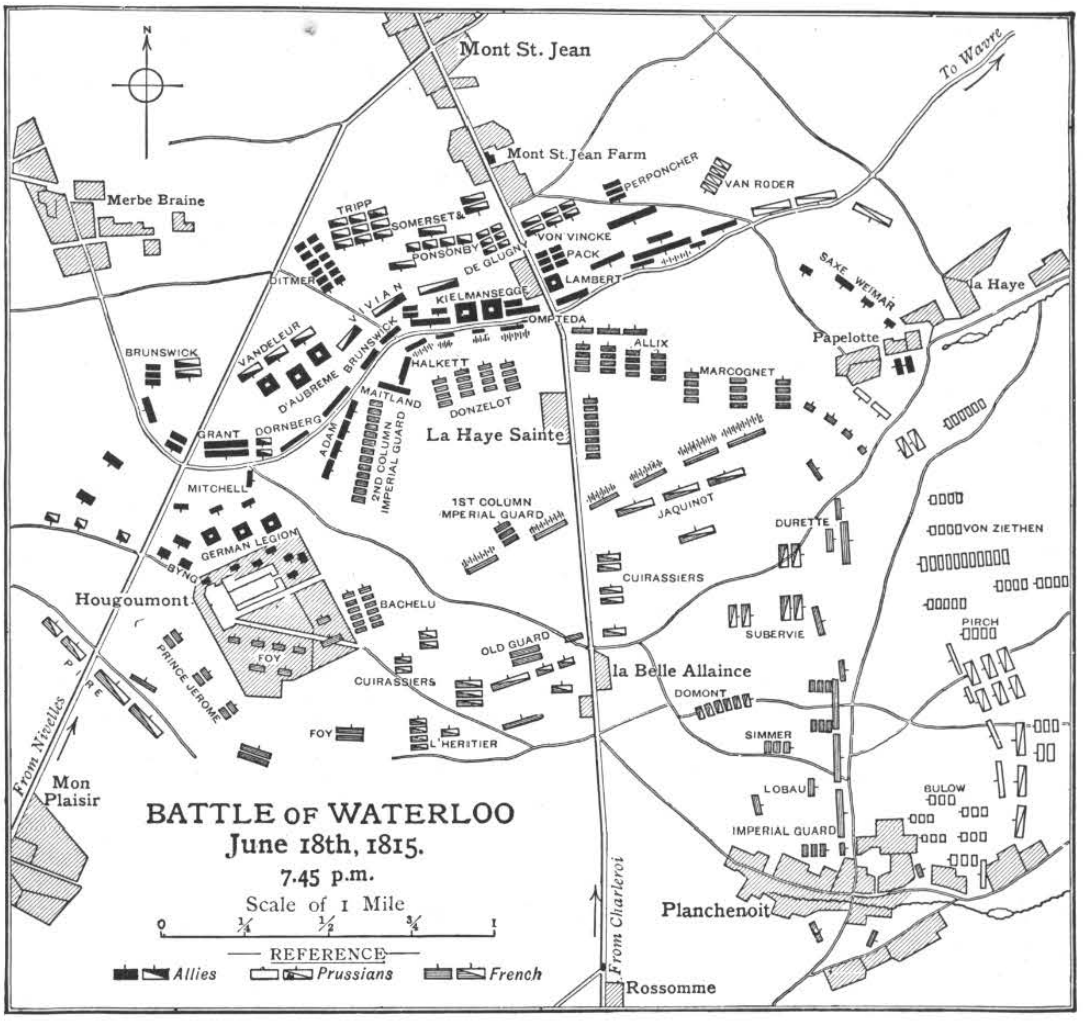






Right: *The effect of Maitland's and Adams' fire on the Imperial Guard column.*

The closing phase of the battle with the arrival of Blücher's Prussian Army



to break the weakened British line. The battalions of the Infantry of the Imperial Guard collated before 'La Belle Alliance' for this final and dramatic climax to the battle comprised five battalions of the Middle Guard:

1st Battalion of the 3rd Regiment of the Grenadiers à Pied.
1st and 2nd Battalions of the 4th Regiment of the Grenadiers à Pied, but reduced to the strength of a single battalion.
1st and 2nd Battalions of the 3rd Regiment of the Chasseurs à Pied.
1st and 2nd Battalions of the 4th Regiment of the Chasseurs à Pied, also much reduced and comprising the strength of only one battalion.

The battalions were formed into square columns and began to advance in echelon the right column leading but as they advanced the two battalions of the 3rd Regiment of Chasseurs were pushed up into one solid mass and the attack proceeded in four great squares.

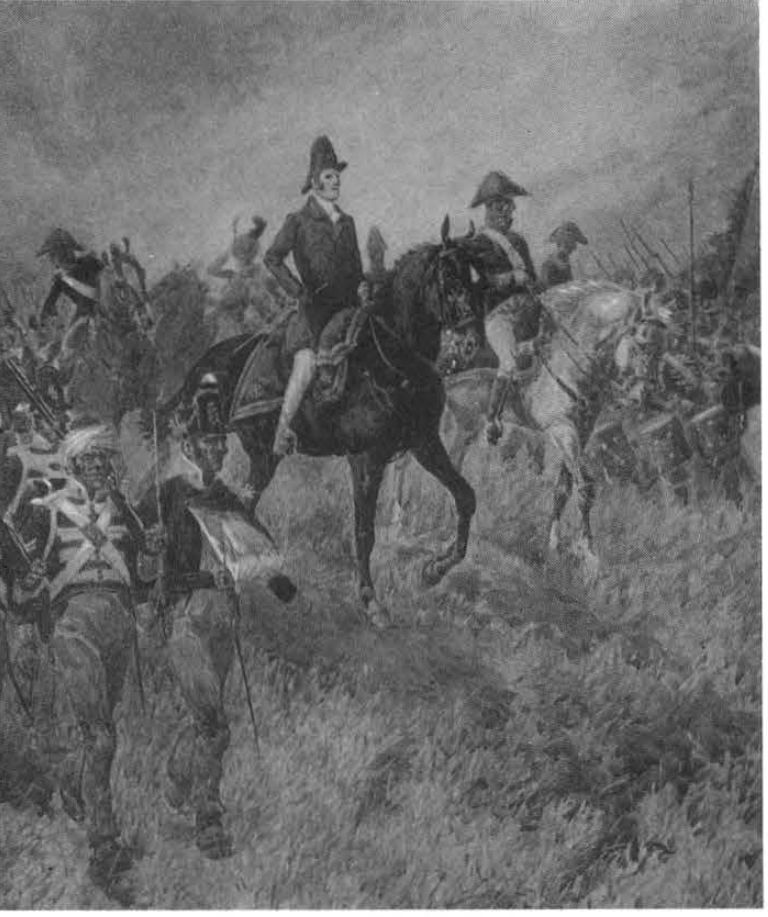
The 1st and 3rd Regiments of Grenadiers were destined to attack the 30th and 73rd Foot and the 1st Brigade of the 3rd Dutch Belgian Division. The 4th Regiment of Grenadiers were directed against the 33rd Foot and the 69th Foot and the third column, comprising the two battalions of the 3rd Regiment of the Chasseurs à Pied, marched up the slope towards the position occupied by Maitland's Foot Guards.

As the 3rd Regiment of Chasseurs à Pied began to head the column of the infantry of the Imperial Guard up the slope towards the Allied position it became exposed to a concentrated and galling artillery fire from the Allied right wing. It was proceeded by Colonel Malet the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Chasseurs together with General Michel and Majors Cardinal and Angelet. The drums were beating the 'pas de charge' and the men marched with their arms presented and the Eagles held aloft. The Guard marched with measured step as if on parade at the Tuilleries. Breaches in the column were instantly closed up by the old veteran NCOs and the officers waved swords and hats aloft and shouted 'Vive L'Empereur' and 'En avant a la baionnette'. As the column reached the crest of the ridge General Michel fell mortally wounded.

At this time no man in the Foot Guards was visible to the advancing French. The battalions of the Foot Guards had been ordered to lie down in four ranks in the thick wheat on the reverse side of the slope, under the crest of the ridge and in the immediate shelter of a low bank bordering a narrow sunken road. Just as the head of the two battalions of Chasseurs cleared the ridge they were less than fifty yards from the hidden Foot Guards. The Duke shouted, 'Now Maitland! Now's your time', and the Foot Guards stood up as one man. The effect of this silent red wall rising up through the thick black powder smoke drifting across the French front caused their leading files, to stop and before they could properly deploy the Foot Guards fired, volley after volley into the dense French mass. The men in the rear ranks loaded and passed their arms to those in front so that the volleying was almost continual. The French could not advance for the hundreds of dead and dying in their front and now Bolton's and Ramsay's batteries began to pour grape and canister into their flank. For some minutes the French Guards remained almost stationary under this murderous fusillade then Maitland ordered the Foot Guards to charge with the bayonet. In minutes the artillery had to stop firing because of the confusion on the forward slope. The shattered French first column broke up and dispersed. Colonel Malet and Majors Cardinal and Angelet were all killed. Meantime a second column of the Imperial Guard were steadily coming forward and Maitland's men were forced to break off their bayonet attack and retreat to their former position in some disorder. Orders were misunderstood and in the ensuing mélée the second column of French no doubt thought their moment of

Right: *A Victorian painting which captures the spirit of the 'Now Maitland, now's your time' incident even though the artist is in error in uniform detail and in depicting the bearskin cap, which were not worn on this campaign. (See text on headdress). Note the sergeant's pike, the drummer's heavily laced coat and the flattering portrait of the Duke of Wellington (National Army Museum).*

Below: *The 52nd Regiment of Foot firing into the flank of the second French column during the final counter-attack described opposite. A guard artillery battery coming up in support of the Imperial Guard receives the 52nd's fire at point-blank range.*

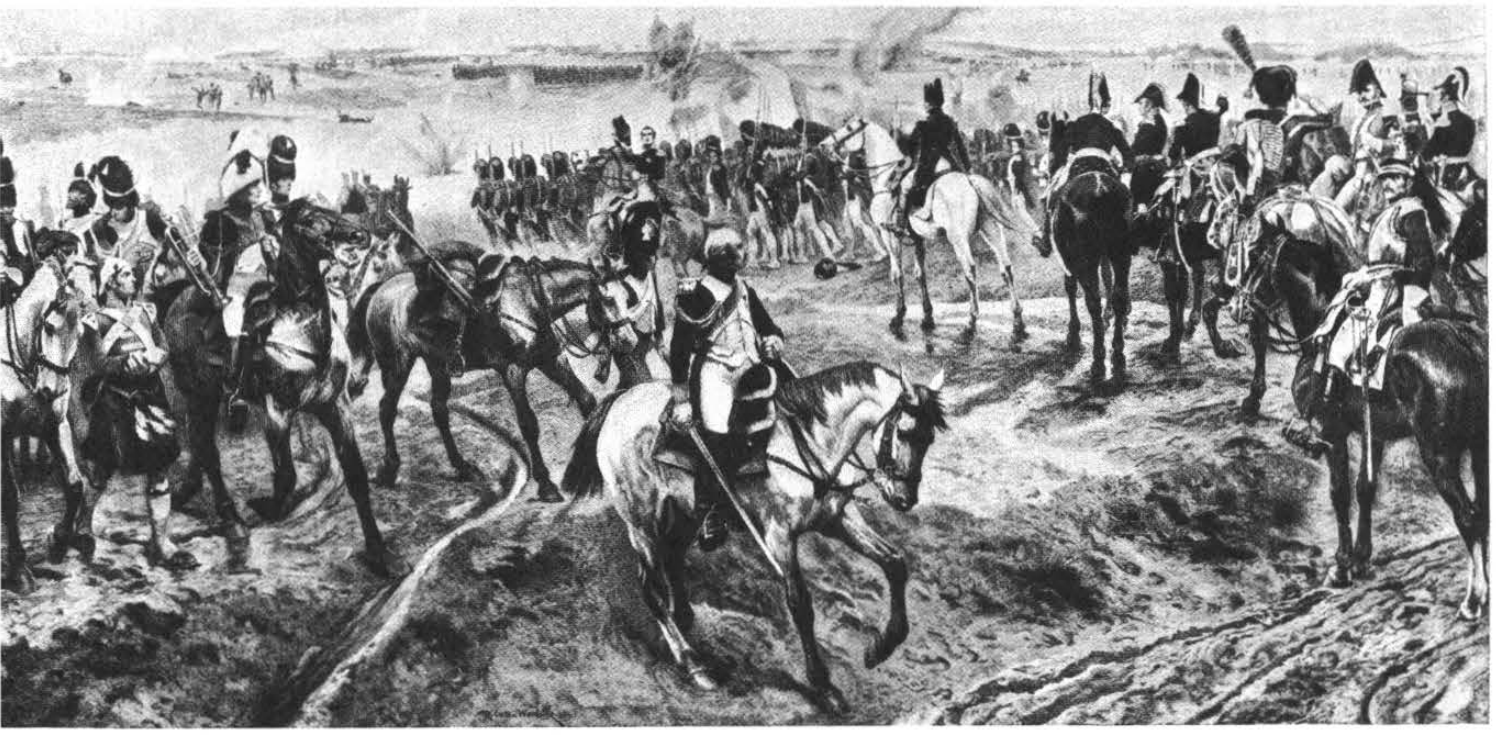


Above: *Wellington leads his men in the final general advance, his staff officers riding with him. Note the drums in the background.* Right: *The arrival of the Prussians; a cavalry column is saluted by a British infantry officer as they take up their position on the Allied flank.*

Below: *A famous Caton Woodville painting which shows Napoleon (with his staff officers) watching the Imperial Guard infantry column moving up for their ill-fated attack on the British line. On the left Horse Grenadiers of the Guard withdraw to the rear, with a captured Highlander walking warily alongside the trumpeter.*

triumph had come but, as they reached the top of the rise, Lt Col Sir John Colborne of the 52nd Regiment took the initiative and ordered his regiment, the 71st, and the 95th Regiments to wheel into position in the flank of, and parallel to, the French. By this time the Foot Guards had recovered, were formed up and were swiftly told off in companies. When the combined fire of these British lines struck into the flank and front of French column at point blank range the dense mass of the second column of Imperial Guard infantry began to disintegrate. The front files tried to deploy or retreat, the rear of the column pressed forward, and the whole dense mass was thrown into confusion. Over a thousand muskets continued to smash their fire into the squirming mass of troops trying desperately to escape from their terrifying position. As the huge force sullenly retreated down the slope the cry went up 'La Garde recule' – The Guard gives way.

Shortly after, with the Prussians entering the field in force on Napoleon's flank the Duke of Wellington determined on a bold move and spurred his horse to the highest part of the ridge and, silhouetted against a bloody sky, waved his hat over his head. This was taken as the signal for a general advance and the Foot Guards and their comrades marched forward with drums beating, fifes shrilling and pipes playing, the men cheering each other on. It was the beginning of the end of the Grand Army.



AFTERMATH OF BATTLE

Above: *The scene of the battles at Waterloo and Quatre Bras has not changed significantly since 1815. This photograph of the field of Quatre Bras was taken in 1965 on the 150th anniversary of the conflict and must appear now very much as it was to the soldiers of 1815.*

Extracts from the London Gazette and the Gentleman's Magazine

'On the 29th July 1815 H.R.H. the Prince Regent approved of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards being made a Regiment of Grenadiers and styled 'The 1st or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards' in commemoration of their having defeated the Infantry of the Imperial Guard upon the memorable occasion of the Battle of Waterloo'.
(War Office Letter.)

'On the 29th July 1815 the Prince Regent granted, as a mark of his Royal approbation, of the distinguished conduct of the Brigades of Foot Guards in the Victory of Waterloo to approve of all Ensigns of the three Regiments of Foot Guards having the rank of Lieutenant in the Army and that such rank shall be attached to all future appointments to Ensigns in the Foot Guards in the same manner as Lieutenants of those regiments obtain the rank of Captain.'
(War Office Letter.)

'On the 23rd December 1815 the Prince Regent was pleased to approve that the undermentioned regiments be permitted to bear upon their colours and appointments the word 'Waterloo' in commemoration of their distinguished part in the battles in the Low Countries in 1815 – inter alia – 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 1st or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards and the 2nd Battalions of the Coldstream Regiment and the 3rd Foot Guards.'
(War Office Letter.)

'On 10th March 1816 the Prince Regent was graciously pleased, in the name of His Majesty, and on his behalf, to command in commemoration of the brilliant and decisive victory of Waterloo a medal shall be conferred upon every officer, NCO and private soldier of the British Army present upon that memorable occasion. His Royal Highness has further been pleased to command that the ribbon issued with the medal shall never be worn but with the medal suspended from it.'
(Horse Guards Letter.)

'18th June 1816. Today the French Eagles captured at Waterloo were lodged in the Chapel Royal Whitehall. A Brigade of Foot Guards were formed in St James Park at nine o'clock, of which one company consisting of a Captain, 3 subalterns, 2 sergeants, and 84 privates, all of whom were veterans of the Battle of Waterloo were appointed escort and took post opposite 'Melbourne House'. Two Guards Bands of music were present in *State Clothing*. The Duke of York proceeded to the parade and after the Colours had been trooped the detachment proceeded to the Tilt Yard lead by the two bands. The escort presented arms, the bands played the 'Grenadiers March' and the Eagles were taken round the square in ordinary time. The trophies were carried by sergeants of the 1st and 3rd Foot Guards and on passing the colours of the 1st or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards the Eagles were lowered and the colours of that regiment raised aloft and majestically waved and the troops all gave three loud huzzas . . .'
(Gentleman's Magazine.)

Some Anecdotes of the Battle

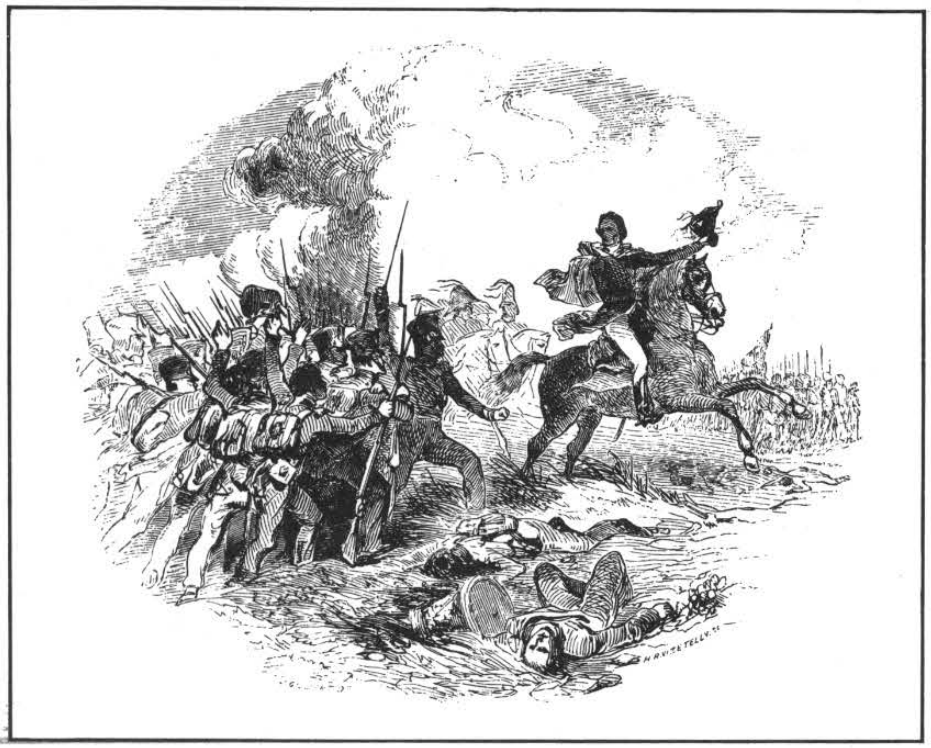
The Coldstream Regiment

A sergeant of the Coldstream Regiment was awarded the legacy of a freehold of a farm in perpetuity on being selected by the Duke of Wellington as the NCO of the British Army whose conduct had been the most courageous during the Battle. The Duke recorded in giving his opinion that during the Battle the sergeant had requested his company commander to give him permission to retire from the ranks for a short time. The officer was perturbed by this request from an NCO whose conduct had otherwise been exemplary. On being questioned the sergeant promised to return directly and his commanding officer observed him dash away into an adjoining barn which was blazing fiercely. The sergeant emerged some seconds later bearing another Guardsman across his shoulders. He deposited the badly wounded man under a hedge, gave him water from his canteen, and ran back to take his position in the ranks and the subsequent pursuit of the enemy. It transpired that the wounded soldier was the sergeant's brother.

The Duke also recommended Lieutenant Colonel Sir James Macdonnell for the prize of £500 for the bravest man on the field. To quote the Duke 'The success of the outcome of the Battle turned on the closing of the gates of Hougoumont and these gates were closed in the very nick of time by the efforts of Sir James Macdonell'. Sir James, on hearing of the award, is alleged to have said 'I cannot claim all this money for closing the gates of Hougoumont. Sergeant John Graham who was with me, saw the importance of the gate, rushed forward and together we closed the gates. What I therefore propose is that the sergeant and myself share the prize equally between us'. Sergeant Graham was awarded his share and lived to enjoy the fruits of his bravery until 1845.

The 1st or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards

'General Maitland was ordered to drive some enemy from a wood. The General gave the order for the men to rapidly advance



Left: *Wellington doffs his hat and rides forward into full view to signal the general advance to his troops. This is a near-contemporary French artist's view of the incident. The Victorian artists' impression on page 24 makes an interesting comparison and portrays the same incident a few moments later as the troops start to move forward.*

but knowing that their ammunition was desperately short gave the order for the men to remove their caps and to give loud 'huzzas'. This they did and the French momentarily disconcerted by the stratagem and no doubt thinking the British were raving mad retired without firing a shot . . .'

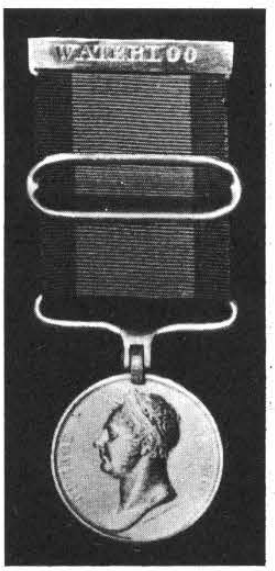
Anniversary

On the first anniversary of the Battle an entertainment was prepared for the veterans of the 1st or Grenadier and Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards, and their colleagues the Royal Horse Guards who were at that time in cantonments with them. At the head of the room the crossed and gloriously tattered colours were displayed and at the other end the new colours. Plates were laid for 900 men and the menu consisted of mutton, boiled beef, veal, ham and meat pies, plum pudding, cheese and vegetables. At convenient intervals were 24 kilderkins of porter. At half past one the two regiments in Full Dress, headed by their respective Colonels marched the 'Long Walk' and before the troops were arranged the Duke and Duchess of York arrived. The men being seated the drummers and buglers sounded and all were stood to. The troops then applied themselves to the duties before them with great glee and every man being abundantly satisfied the tables were cleared and the following toasts were given: 'The King', 'The Prince Regent', 'The Queen and Royal Family', 'The Duke of York', 'The Duke of Wellington', 'Sir Robert Hill and the men of the Grenadier Guards', 'Mr Carbonell' (sic) and 'All absent friends in the glory of Waterloo'. After the meal the men drew their pipes and recounted stories of danger and sang their 'ditties of the camp'.

21st June 1817

Grant by Parliament to the Army which served under the Duke of Wellington in the Battle of Waterloo and the capture of Paris. The shares of the prize are as follows:

Class 1 – General Officers.	£1274.	10.	$10\frac{3}{4}$.
Class 2 – Field Officers & Colonels	£ 433.	2.	$4\frac{3}{4}$.
Class 3 – Captains.	£ 90.	7.	$3\frac{3}{4}$.
Class 4 – Subalterns.	£ 34.	14.	$9\frac{1}{2}$.
Class 5 – Sergeants.	£ 19.	4.	4.
Class 6 – Corporals, Drummers, and Private men.	£ 2.	11.	4.



Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards, Grenadier in Service Dress (left) and First Foot Guards, Private in State Clothing, 1815 (right).

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